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extended attributes

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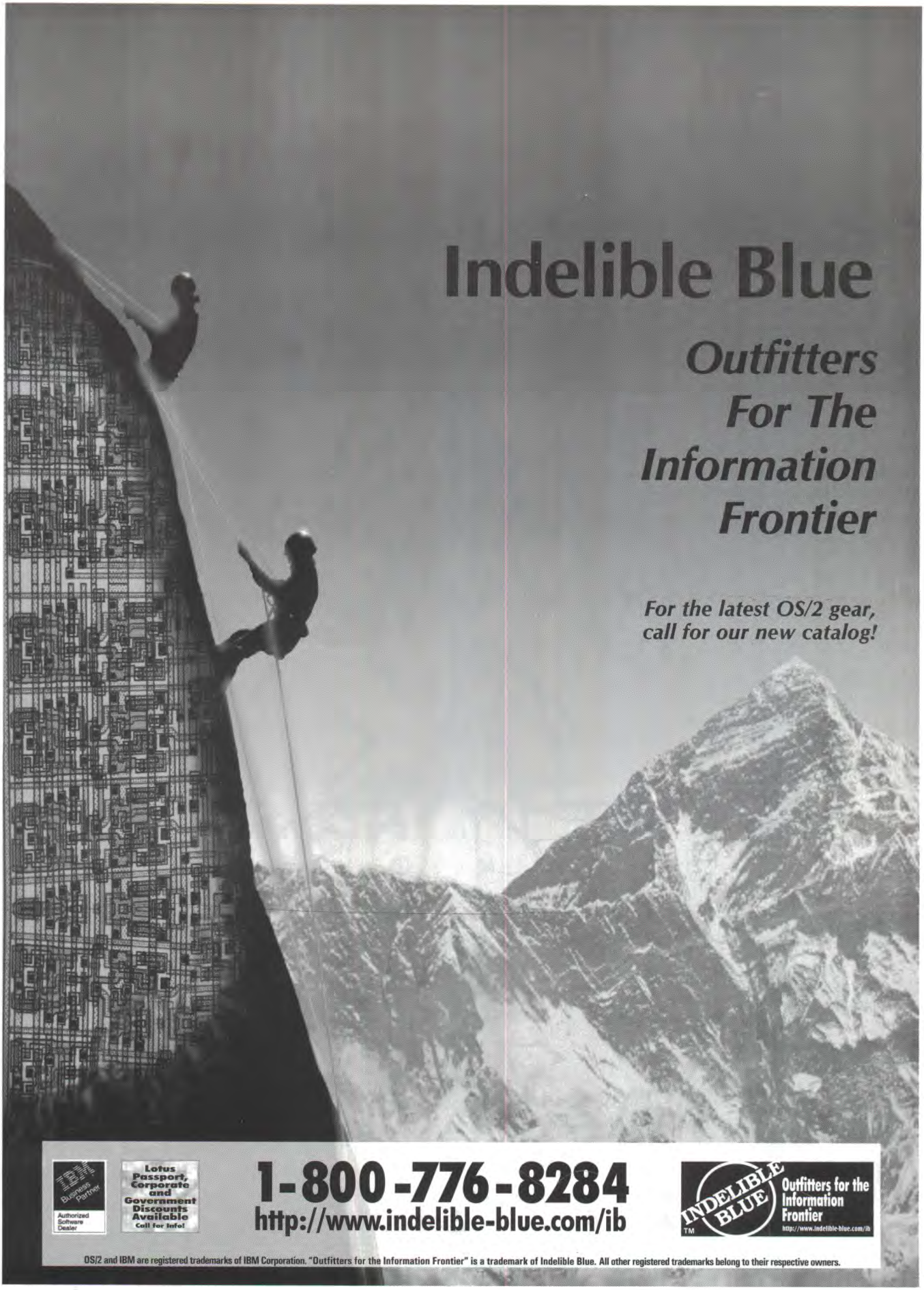
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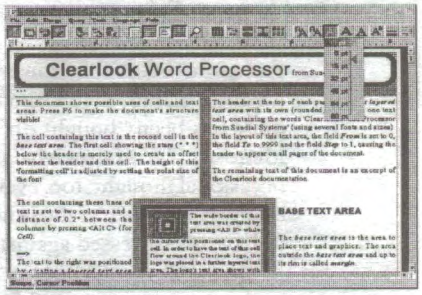

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extended attributes

extended attributes is the award winning monthly magazine of the Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc.

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Dysfunctional relations

by Bill Schindler, editor-in-chief

For some online OS/2 users, one favorite "flame" is to claim that the press has been "bought off by Microsoft." You may have that occasional thought, too, even if your hobby isn't to rant at those imagined to have transgressed against OS/2.

But, well, think about it. Paying someone is not the way Microsoft works. In fact they're not even known for paying their own employees very well!

Okay, so they probably aren't shipping suitcases of cash to the press. Then how do they manage to get so much positive—sometimes blindly positive—coverage?

Imagine you are a member of the computer press. Every day your mail arrives; three-quarters of it consists of items concerning Microsoft: white papers, flyers, press releases, books, software, you name it. The average press person gets several inches of mail every day, so you get lots and lots of Microsoft, Microsoft, Microsoft mixed in with the other information.

And you *need* information in order to survive in your business. Making a living means you must write a small book worth of articles and reviews every month. Deadlines stack on top of deadlines with no end in sight.

Microsoft dominates the industry, so you have to pay attention to what they're doing. You can't throw that mail into the trash unread—you have to at least scan it.

Now if all that brainwash... uh, information... doesn't do the trick, then they still have other ways.

You may be invited to one of their press conferences. On some people, these seem to have an effect equivalent to an old-time revival meeting. ("Hallelujah and pass the MS software!")

If they find out that you're working on an article about one of their products, they'll call you. They'll ask if they can help in any way. "Would you like to talk with the product manager?" "Do you need anything else?" When you're up to your armpits in feature-laden software, with a deadline leering at you, it's hard to refuse anyone who offers to help.

If you write something negative and you're important enough, MS will even send a couple people to your office. Just to improve relations.

Finally, if you really rub MS the wrong way, they'll cut you off. No more beta software. No more information. Remember that your job relies on information.

Microsoft doesn't need to buy off anybody in the press. They recognize that you need information and they bury you in information. Or you don't play along and they bury you.

On the other hand, in the last year, we've heard from several IBM managers who are rabid supporters of Microsoft and MS software.

Wonder if they've been bought off?

Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc (POSSI) is an organization of computer users with an interest in IBM's OS/2 operating system.

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on the bitstream

Who's on first?

by Esther Schindler

From an end-user perspective, many of OS/2's strengths are those which are visible. The Workplace Shell is a consistent, flexible interface between you and the underlying operating system. Why look further?

Yet, a real operating system is underneath the covers, working invisibly and reliably, as it should. I thought that, as a change of pace from my industry viewpoints, it would be fun to talk about some of OS/2's technical underpinnings.

You don't have to know the information in this article; OS/2 takes care of these matters with no interaction with you. But it's sometimes nice to know how the system works!

What's multitasking, really?

Among the buzzwords you hear bandied about are *preemptive* and *cooperative* multitasking. What are these, and what's the difference?

In cooperative multitasking, used in Windows 3.1, different tasks are expected to "cooperate." If you run two or three applications, each program is supposed to yield control to Windows when it doesn't actively need the system. It's supposed to work like taking a breath between sentences.

In practice, though, it's more like living in a house with two teenagers and one phone. If the parent tells the teenagers, "Let me know when you're done with the phone," you know the result. Just as no teenager is ever truly finished using the phone, Windows applications were never very good at yielding control. If you tried to recalculate a large spreadsheet, redraw a Corel image, and download a file at the same time, you were bound to lose characters.

Instead, OS/2 uses preemptive multitasking. To extend the analogy, the parent says, "You can use the phone for up to fifteen minutes. Then your sister gets it, for the next fifteen minutes." As you've surely experienced, in practice this is much more successful, and OS/2's smooth multitasking is one of its greatest strengths.

Yet, how does OS/2 know which tasks to run?

A matter of priority

When all things are equal, OS/2 gives each task an equal amount of time. This is called *round-robin* scheduling. The period of time is tiny, measured in milliseconds, so the system appears to run many things at once. Of course, because you have only one CPU, what actually happens is that OS/2 switches between programs—but it does so very, very fast.

Naturally, not everything is equal; some tasks are more important than others. To manage this disparity, OS/2's scheduling algorithms use four overall levels of priority:

- Fixed high
- High
- Regular
- Idle

Each level of priority is further broken down into 32 sublevels of priority, so there's plenty of granularity for the system (or an OS/2 programmer) to work with.

I think of the tasks that run at the fixed high priority as the "identity" processes. These are the system utilities that keep the computer "in touch with itself." Tasks that might run at fixed high priority would include "make sure I still have a timer chip" or "keep in touch with the video card."

Most tasks that run at high priority are connectivity-related, such as network drivers and TCP/IP. The level of importance that OS/2 gives to connectivity is reflected in the speed at which it will (invisibly) reconnect with a server that has come back up. When we added new software to our OS/2 Warp Server, my OS/2 workstation was logged back in before we were able to log in the administrator account!

Almost any application that you personally interact with runs at regular priority. That includes all DOS and Windows applications, and just about every OS/2 application.

Idle hands

In OS/2, "idle" is just a priority class. OS/2 is never truly idle; it just has stuff set to a very low priority. Few applications run at the Idle priority class; the most obvious example is a screen saver.

However, that's not all that runs at Idle. A few years ago, Bill was busy reading a manual. Suddenly, he heard the "chug, chug" of the disk drive, and looked up to see the ominous white-on-black text that usually indicates a Trap error. Alarmed, he examined the message, which said, "I was puttering around on your hard disk, and I found a sector of questionable quality. I moved the data (it's fine, don't worry) but I thought you'd like to know." Well, perhaps the HPFS message wasn't that chatty; this is IBM, after all. But it's one example of what the operating system does when it has "nothing else to do." It's as if you had a housekeeper who dusted, when nothing else was going on.

Incidentally, the nature of the Idle priority is the reason that ZD never wrote an OS/2 benchmark program to complement its WinStone set. A few years ago, I corresponded with one of the ZD benchmark operations people, who explained that they couldn't write an OS/2 benchmark because, "IBM won't give us a WaitUntilIdle API." If my understanding is correct, the ZD benchmarks of the time recorded how long it took to run several Windows applications; when the system said it was idle, they knew they were done. OS/2 couldn't provide an "Idle" flag because the system is never really idle... it's dusting, at the very least.

So, you now understand more about OS/2's priority management than did ZD's benchmark operations staff. (Yes, I told them all of the above. Apparently, it didn't make a difference.)

Adjusting the knobs

Mostly, the information above is just, well, informational. You can't do much to adjust the priority of any given application in your system;

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that's up to the programmers. Yet, there are a few things you *can* do.

Please don't feel compelled to try these out just because I mention them. Under most circumstances, the default settings are the correct ones. I've seen people twiddle with operating system's settings for no real reason, and occasionally they've had the same effect as a toddler twisting the bass and treble knobs on the stereo.

The setting that adjusts OS/2's priority settings most dramatically is the CONFIG.SYS statement, PRIORITY_DISK_IO. In most situations, leave it set to YES. If you change it to NO, OS/2 gives greater priority to the connectivity tasks than to "listening" for the person using the keyboard and mouse. It makes sense to change this value on a server (including a Web server or Notes server), as long as a human isn't also trying to use the system regularly. If a live person tries to use the system with this setting, it will respond very slowly.

Another CONFIG.SYS statement that affects scheduling is MAXWAIT. With the default value of 3, OS/2 waits three seconds (seconds, mind you—not milliseconds or nanoseconds) before it gives a *starved process* a moment of CPU time. In other words, if a lot of things run concurrently in your OS/2 system, those with relatively high priority grab most of the attention, and a lower-priority task might seem "ignored." But after three seconds, OS/2 gives the lower priority task a nod of attention. It's as if you had a family with twelve children, all clamoring for attention, and the tiny, quiet toddler doesn't get noticed. The "3" says that every three seconds, the parent would give a moment of attention to the toddler.

You can change this value (to 1 or 2), but it's a trade-off. If you give more attention to lower-priority tasks, your higher priority tasks will get less attention. Personally, I leave it at the default value.

DOS Settings

Strangely enough, you have more control over the priority management of DOS and Windows programs than you do for OS/2 applications. Presumably, the software engineers figured that OS/2 developers were smart enough to choose the right priority class for each thread in the application, and thus you-the-user should keep your paws off.

At any rate, you can adjust the manner in which a DOS application runs by changing the setup values in the Properties notebook (Settings notebook in OS/2 Warp 3).

One important setting is IDLE_SECONDS. It controls the time period (in seconds) that the system should wait for input or output from this application before OS/2 decides that the program is idle. That's because OS/2 automatically decreases the application's priority when it detects an idle program (and thus can give its attention to the other applications you're using). If an application seems to run slowly while it's waiting for input, you can increase this value from the default of zero.

Another setting that affects DOS or Windows communications programs, in particular, is the IDLE_SENSTIVITY setting. OS/2 uses this setting to determine if the program is stuck, waiting patiently for a keystroke. Ordinarily, the default setting is just fine, but if you're using, say, an old copy of Procomm for DOS to dial into a BBS, the application may appear "idle" to OS/2 because you-the-user are waiting for the BBS to respond. (For instance, you might be waiting for it to zip a QWK packet.)

With some DOS applications, a program that's running in the background really *can* be ignored. For instance, if I'm not typing into the session where I run Quicken, it's fine with me if OS/2 ignores it. It's not as if Quicken will do anything when I'm not telling it to do something. In such a case, you can change the DOS_BACKGROUND_EXECUTION setting to OFF. OS/2 ignores the DOS application (Quicken, in this example) until I give it the system focus again. (The application with "focus" is the one whose title bar is highlighted; it's where *your* focus is, and the task that gets the input from the mouse and keyboard.)

However, don't recklessly change this setting for every DOS program. Some DOS applications do work in the background; for instance, you don't want your WordPerfect 5.1 to quit printing just because you've gone off to work on something else. Also, if you cut-and-paste between a Windows application (whose background execution is turned off) and another window, the system may lock up. (There are technical reasons, but they're too dull to go into.)

In OS/2 Warp 4, you can also adjust the priority for a DOS session, by changing the SESSION_PRIORITY setting. This refers to the 32 levels of priority in each priority class that I mentioned earlier. By default, DOS and Windows programs are set to the lowest value of 1, but you can adjust this if one program really demands the attention. (Naturally, that attention comes from the rest of your system resources; there's always a trade-off.)

This degree of customization offered by OS/2 is one of the many reasons that I always recommend that after you install DOS or Windows applications, you should create a separate program object for each. If one application requires a specific setting, it can have it; other DOS and Windows applications won't be affected by the change. Each program can run the way it needs to.

Summary

Wow, it's really different for me to wrap up an article without ever mentioning a topic related to marketing, the forces in the computer industry, or anybody who works at IBM!

But I'm glad I took the time out to point out some of the technology behind OS/2. That's what we have in common: we all want to use the operating system to make our lives better. I hope that the information in this article will help you do just that.

press release

MSR Development announces BackMaster Ultra

MSR Development Corporation announced BackMaster Ultra, a new version of the company's bestselling backup and disaster recovery software.

In combination with a logical or removable drive, BackMaster Ultra can back up up to 10 times faster than today's typical tape drive systems. BackMaster Ultra now supports the Iomega Zip and Jazz devices and Syquest Syjet devices, and other removable devices in addition to internal hard drives.

"BackMaster Ultra with logical device support is now positioned as our premium offering, while the basic version, BackMaster 3.0, supports tape drives only," said Dudley Westlake, president of MSR Development Corporation. "Both versions of BackMaster come with our 30 day money-back warranty and our free technical support."

"Enhancements to the original version of BackMaster will continue with support for Iomega's new DITTO MAX tape drives planned before the end of this year," added Westlake. "We are encouraged by IBM's renewed support for OS/2 as part of their Java and Network Centric marketing programs and that is why we continue our investment in OS/2 software."

BackMaster Ultra's support of removable media provides many more high performance hardware options for those that are concerned about long back up and disaster recovery times associated with tape drives. Based upon immediate customer demand, BackMaster Ultra Prerelease is being offered for sale now; the final production release will be available 4th quarter 1997 for $149.95, Current registered owners of BackMaster 2.0/3.0 can receive discounted upgrade's directly from MSR.

MSR products are distributed by MicroCentral and available worldwide from Indelible Blue and other OS/2 resellers.

MSR Development Corporation is a leading OS/2 software development company. They are located at 4407 Manchester Avenue #104, Encinitas, CA 92024; 760-633-3900. Other products available from MSR include the MicroLearn Game Pack Volume II and ScreenSavr Master. Visit the company's Web site at `www.msrdev.com` for additional information.

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.two warped

Anatomy of a crash

by David Both

I know that I promised to talk this month about the new class of ISPs. I will get to it next month, but I have some observations to make first.

Attitude

OS/2 has the reputation of being very solid and dependable. This is borne out in the fact that most companies which have OS/2 networks, particularly in conjunction with other networks, generally have had to put very little time and money into maintaining the OS/2 side of their networks.

Because there is little to do once an OS/2 network is up and running, the people responsible tend to forget about it. Any expertise in OS/2 which was present tends to atrophy. When problems do arise they are usually circumvented rather than fixed. This is due to the tendency of all organizations to take the quick fix, such as writing a little REXX program to circumvent a problem, rather than take the time to deal with fixing the true cause. For instance, installing a Fixpack may require downtime which the managers of the users of the network don't want to allow. "Productivity will suffer," is the response when IT people ask line managers for downtime to install fixes to problems which are not readily apparent.

As a result, the OS/2 part of the network tends to become very down level. It has run so well for so long, with so little intervention, that the real emphasis is on the network which requires all the attention: the Windows NT network. Everyone knows more about Windows NT than about OS/2 because they have to spend so much more time fixing and administering it.

In one company I have worked with, every time we asked for a maintenance window to install Fixpacks or systems management software like SystemView, our request was refused. Even when the request was for 2:00am on a weekend it was denied.

I knew that this particular network was very fragile and would soon crash catastrophically. It did, much sooner than I anticipated.

Anatomy of a crash

Although we did not know all of this before or during the crash and the resulting efforts to restore the network to a semblance of normalcy, the following story is what we uncovered during the postmortem of the crash.

The OS/2 portion of the network became increasingly unstable, over a period of many months, due to neglect. Nagging little problems began to appear. They were always repaired or circumvented, but there was no time to try to determine the root cause of all these little problems. Since they were never catastrophic in nature, no pressure from above was brought to bear.

Some of the contributory factors to this crash were:

- Lack of network maintenance.
- Problems were circumvented rather than fixed.
- Old application software which had been built in-house, and which also badly needed upgrading, much of which used old or undocumented NETBIOS APIs.
- No documentation of the network.
- No tested recovery procedures.
- Multiple versions of software in use on different servers, all using the same data files.

At some time one Saturday, one of the servers on the domain crashed. A hard drive failure on the boot drive brought it to a (literally) screeching halt. No one knows exactly when this occurred because the "critical" software running on this server was not missed by any of the users, nor was it reported to the IT department.

At about 11:00pm Saturday night, at shift change, users began having trouble logging on and off the network, and resources were no longer available. After several unsuccessful attempts to restart the Primary Domain Controller (PDC), the network engineer on site called me about 12:05am Sunday morning. I had him work through several things to restart the DC, but they all failed.

I arrived on site at 12:55am Sunday and began to look at the problem. We quickly determined that to restart the DC we had to reinstall the network operating system. Instead of installing the down level versions, I decided to install OS/2 Warp Server and then add the Fixpacks. We also decided to install SystemView so we could more closely monitor the servers.

We got OS/2 Warp Server installed and up and running quickly, with no trouble. We had saved the NET.ACC file, and copied it back when we reinstalled the server software. Unfortunately, the NET.ACC file was damaged, so the links between user IDs and resources were broken. Logon worked, but no applications appeared in the Network Applications folder. In addition, the backup software that was used did not back up open files, such as NET.ACC (which is always open when the network is running).

We tried to create a new ID, which did work correctly, and then added resources to it. Unfortunately, the fully reconstituted ID did not work. We then deleted everything and started adding resources back into our new ID. We found that resources associated with one particular server caused the problem. We located the offending server and determined that the hard drive had crashed. This was the trigger event which caused all of the damage.

We also determined that simply removing the offending resources from the user IDs did not resolve the logon problem. All of the IDs would have to be rebuilt.

By this time it was 5:00am Sunday. We called in a team of folks to recreate all of the several hundred user IDs. This process took two teams until 4:00am Monday morning to complete.

And, of course, there were the usual residual effects from the crash which we continued to experience, and fix, for several days.

Over the next few days, we upgraded other servers to Warp

Server, and added the latest fixpacks. As we did, the network became increasingly more stable. The little nagging problems went away as we took the time to really fix the root cause of the problems.

It was ugly, but we recovered.

Hiding from reality

The real problem is that too many managers do not understand the difference between the *symptom* and the *problem*. Just because the symptom disappears does not mean that the problem is fixed. Unfortunately most managers have the mentality of an ostrich where the network is concerned—especially when it runs as well as OS/2 generally does.

I hope that you can use this little story to convince someone in *your* company, or perhaps one of your clients, to do the right thing and to allow the network to be properly serviced.

After all, you would not run a car 50,000 miles without an oil change. Or would you?

Banco do Brazil: the rest of the story

The IBM PC Company has received some comeuppance for not supporting OS/2. You may have seen this story—at least the public part of it—on the WarpFM web site at `www.software.ibm.com/os/warp/warpfm`.

Banco do Brazil wants to reduce the cost per transaction of doing business. Working with IBM Global Services, they (naturally!) chose OS/2 Warp to provide the mission-critical base for doing so. They will use Java as a platform-independent vehicle for providing access to banking services for the bank's internal users, as well as for the bank's customers.

Banco do Brazil chose Compaq computers as the hardware platform for this project. The IBM PC Co. asked why *they* didn't get the business for the hardware. IBM Personal Software Products (PSP), the folks who make OS/2 and who worked with IBM Global Services to develop the business, responded that Banco do Brazil expressed a deep and overriding concern about the level of support provided by the PC Company for OS/2. This included lack of OS/2 drivers for PC Company hardware, and the low quality of support for OS/2 on the PC Company products which do have drivers.

This is not a pretty picture. The PC Company ignores OS/2, hoping it will go away—as do many others in IBM but outside of PSP—and then they whine when other parts of IBM try to make a sale despite the lack of PC Company support for IBM's own products. PSP has repeatedly offered the services of programmers and engineers to help the PC Company write OS/2 drivers for their hardware. The PC Company simply ignores the offers.

The PC Company can't have it both ways. Lou Gerstner should fire those people, or sell off the PC Company and start over from scratch. I certainly would not put up with stupidity—and disloyalty—like that! Perhaps I will bring it up at the next stockholders meeting.

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Users helping users

Over the years, it has become a tradition for the January issue of extended attributes to be dedicated to celebrating the activities of the Society's volunteers.

The core purpose of almost every user group is "users helping users." Members help in hundreds of ways: answering a question, carrying boxes, labelling magazines, writing an article, helping someone install OS/2, and so on. Over the years, the Society has extended the meaning of "users helping users" to include such things as supporting vendors so that OS/2 users have choices in software, and producing a magazine so that information is generally available.

If you are new to the Society, you may not know that everything is done by volunteers. Not a single person is paid for the work they do on administration, the magazine, or the countless other jobs that get done over the course of the year. In fact, every volunteer, from the president down to the person helping carry boxes into a meeting, pays dues just like any "regular" member.

Origins of the Society

Not long after OS/2 2.0 was released, Bill and Esther Schindler started an OS/2 SIG (Special Interest Group) under the auspices of the Phoenix PC Users Group. As time passed, the goals of the SIG began to conflict with the goals of the user group.

So, in June and July of 1994, several members of the OS/2 SIG quietly met and decided to start an independent OS/2 user group. This core group of people were whimsically known as the "OS/Coup."

During the first week of August 1994, the OS/Coup and a group of volunteers met to choose a name, set dues, and select officers. (The original officers were "elected" by flipping a quarter as a means of deciding between contenders.)

The first general meeting was held in August 1994 and SIG meetings began in September.

Most of the people who joined the Society in August 1994 are still members, three and a half years later!

Board and officers

The board of directors and officers represent the most visible group of volunteers in the Society. They show up and often speak at almost every meeting, and their names are on the magazine masthead. They handle the myriad details of keeping the Society running, from organizing meetings to paying the bills.

The board of directors and officers during the past year include:

- Lee Baldwin
- Mike Briggs
- Stan Hall
- Evelyn Hitch
- Dick Krueger
- Sam MacDonald
- Marilyn Pizzo
- Esther Schindler
- Tom Vincent
- Kathy Zechmann

extended attributes

The Society's monthly magazine is produced through the efforts of a large number of people. The two who carry the brunt of most of the behind the scenes work of collecting articles, editing, and layout are Bill and Esther Schindler.

extended attributes started as an eight page newsletter in August of 1994. It grew into a magazine by January 1996. Circulation has grown from the original 45, hovering close to 700 with the current issue.

The magazine has won several awards in the annual Intergalactic User Group newsletter contest.

Early in the life of the newsletter, Bill and Esther did all the work of pasting on mailing labels and stamps. As the Society grew, the job of labelling and stamping became overwhelming. As a result, board meetings and the final preparation of the magazine became a combined monthly fixture known as FSM (for "Fold, Staple, Mutilate") by the regular attendees. The entire process of hand labelling, stamping, bundling, and sacking nearly 700 copies of extended attributes usually takes about two hours every month.

Many people, besides the board members and officers, show up to lend a hand at FSM. These people are some of the true unsung heros in the Society! (Although, since FSM always includes a potluck brunch, they're usually well-fed heros.)

The many volunteers who have contributed by writing, editing, drawing, and proofreading extended attributes in the past year include:

- Elliot Abramowitz
- Marc Abramowitz
- Lee Baldwin
- Ron Boe
- David Both
- Mike Briggs
- Jeri Dube
- Ernie Fisch
- Joel Frey
- Mike Gannon
- Craig Greenwood
- Steven Gurnick
- Susan Haig
- Ron Higgen
- Evelyn Hitch
- Jim Jarosz
- Stan Kropen
- Robert Mahoney
- Susan Malling
- Harry Martin
- Judy McDermott
- Brad Montroy
- Pete Norloff
- Dennis Palmer
- Frank Pizzo
- Marilyn Pizzo
- Christopher Pratt
- Robert Rosenwald
- Scott Saari
- Bill Schindler
- Esther Schindler
- Jeff Shultz
- Ray Sigafoos
- Burke Swanson
- Julian Thomas
- Steve Weeks
- Lyle Wilson
- John Wubbel
- Dave Zechmann

FSM[10]

One of the most wide sweeping changes to the Society happened near the beginning of the year. At that time, the Society mailed out approximately 10,000 copies of

extended attributes to former *OS/2 Magazine* subscribers in the western US.

Preparing the magazines for that large mailing required eight hours of work by a group of about 15 volunteers. That doesn't include the preliminary work needed to acquire the labels (done mostly by Esther Schindler) or the follow-up work needed to haul the boxes and boxes of magazines to a mailing house.

All of the volunteers involved deserve a huge thank you, not only for getting the work done but for making it the big success that it was and is.

OS/2 Marketplace

In March, the Society cosponsored with Indelible Blue a conference for OS/2 software developers and vendors.

The Marketplace Committee did all the work of organizing, finding a hotel, arranging for a cosponsor, setting up presentations, etc. The volunteers who were actively involved on the Marketplace Committee were:

- Mike Briggs
- Joel Frey
- Craig Greenwood
- Stan Hall
- Robert Rosenwald
- Bill Schindler
- Esther Schindler
- Burke Swanson
- Dave Zechmann
- Kathy Zechmann

Many, many other people volunteered time to help make the OS/2 Marketplace conference a success. Thank you to all of you who showed up at the "bag party" and helped out during the conference!

SIG leaders

Special Interest Groups, or SIGs, allow members to explore specific topics in greater detail.

SIG leaders act as a focal point for the SIG, arrange for meetings, and are often the "entertainment" for the SIG meeting. SIG leaders during the last year include:

- Elliot Abramowitz
- Mike Briggs
- Stan Kropen
- Rosey Rosenwald
- Lyle Wilson

Warpstock

Society members took helped with Warpstock in a variety of ways. Since we had a POSSI booth, many of those volunteers were seen setting up and manning the booth. (The Society made money!)

Many other members were more directly involved in organizing and helping run Warpstock itself.

Besides saying thanks to everyone who helped, we'd like to extend a very big thank you to the members of the Southern California OS/2 User Group who did a tremendous job as hosts of Warpstock!

Users helping users

Finally, we'd like to thank *you* for continuing to use OS/2 and supporting the Society. You are the reason we exist!

press release

Indelible Blue creates new developer's system

Indelible Blue is offering a computer specifically to serve the needs of Java software developers.

The system, named Prometheus after the mythological character that introduced fire to mankind, has IBM's award-winning VisualAge for Java Professional development environment pre-loaded across three different operating systems: Microsoft's Windows 95 and Windows NT Workstation as well as IBM's OS/2 Warp v4.

"We built this system with the true cross-platform spirit of Java in mind," notes Indelible Blue President Buck Bohac. "Our customers typically work in cross-platform environments and the need to code and test Java applications in each environment is critical to their success. Sun Microsystems' Java environment has provided developers with the most promising opportunity so far for the longtime dream of true cross-platform development. We hope that our new Prometheus system will contribute toward that goal."

The system, from DFI-USA, is designed to provide the developer with all the power necessary to run all three platforms. It features the customer's choice of a Pentium II MMX 266 MHz or Pentium MMX 233 MHz processor and comes standard with 128 MB of RAM, two 4 GB hard drives, a 4MB Matrox Mystique video card, 24X CDROM drive with 16-bit sound card and a US Robotics 56K modem.

While custom hardware configurations are becoming standard for the industry, operating system choice for consumers has been scarce. "To my knowledge, Indelible Blue is the first to create a single system featuring three different operating systems," says Bohac. "Initial feedback from developers has been very positive."

In gratitude

by Dick Krueger

If you're paying attention, you may have noticed that the byline above has changed. I was out of town and missed a user group board meeting, so they elected me president. (*Note to self*: Don't schedule vacations during the fourth quarter.)

For my first official duty as president, I want to thank Lee Baldwin for the work he's done as president during the last year: a time that has seen a three-fold increase in POSSI membership and significant changes in the direction of the Society and of the OS/2 community. Lee will continue to provide valuable support and insight as vice-president and as a member of the board.

POSSI's growth

Speaking of increasing membership, most of you who are reading this magazine weren't doing so a year ago. At that time, POSSI was still primarily a local user group in central Arizona. We had been in operation as a separate entity for two years; previously, the founders were members of an OS/2 special interest group within the Phoenix PC User's Group. Between August 1994 and February 1997, membership had slowly but steadily increased to around 180 members. Most members lived in Arizona, but several members lived in other states and in Canada. As a matter of fact, the very first dues-paying member (and now lifetime member) lived, and still lives, in California.

During that time we published extended attributes (hats off to Bill Schindler), developed a Web site (kudos to Mike Briggs), attracted an impressive array of speakers for our monthly meetings (special thanks to Esther Schindler), and saw an enthusiastic group of volunteers step forward to help in every way imaginable. And then the world shook.

Whole lotta shakin'

As you probably know, in January 1997, *OS/2 Magazine* ceased publication. That well-known chocolate lover and inimitable program chair, Esther Schindler, had a brainstorm. "Whaddya say," she said, "we send a sample copy of extended attributes to as many *OS/2 Magazine* subscribers as we can?" So Esther arranged things with Miller-Freeman (*OS/2 Magazine*'s publisher) and, with the help of a herd of POSSI volunteers, we sent out about a gazillion copies of this magazine and everybody who got one for free immediately sent in a check for $30 and membership went up by about a gazillion.

Well, it didn't actually go up by that much, but it has increased to well over 500, most of which is directly attributable to that mailing.

Some of the growth has also been fueled by word-of-mouth, or word-of-modem in many cases. POSSI has added several members in the last year outside the U.S. and Canada. We now have members on every habitable continent. (I say "habitable" because we haven't signed up anyone in the Antarctic. Yet.)

POSSI also sponsored a well-received marketing conference aimed at OS/2 software developers and vendors. Rosey Rosenwald deserves a big round of applause (come on, stand up) for leading a great group of volunteers in putting together a great conference.

Caring generosity

Speaking of volunteers (which is mostly what I've been doing here), in case you didn't already know, the Phoenix OS/2 Society is run entirely by volunteers. What you see in your hands is the result of caring, dedicated effort on the part of many talented individuals who do it for intangible rewards; no one is paid for their time or for their efforts.

One more individual who deserves recognition is our long-suffering treasurer, Stan Hall. In the past year he's been inundated with cash, checks, and credit card slips from new members, from the marketing conference, from advertisers, and from various fund-raising efforts. He's also had to send out a lot of invoices and write a lot of checks. (No, we don't have tons of money left in the bank; even with all the work being done by volunteers, there are still a lot of expenses.)

Last but not least, I want to thank you, the members of POSSI, for joining up, and the advertisers for paying up. Without you we couldn't make it happen.

I'm looking forward to another great year for POSSI. OS/2 is not dead, and the Phoenix OS/2 Society is here to prove that. Personally, I'm proud to be able to serve again as president (I was president for the first two years of POSSI), and hope you'll be able to appreciate my efforts a year from now. Meanwhile, if you have any comments, criticisms, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at president@possi.org.

See what OS/2 User Group SCOUG has to say about InfoOnCall :

www.InfoOnCall.com

January meeting

The virtue of mystery

by Esther Schindler

The unknown provides each of us with opportunity. It encourages us to think in terms of possibilities, and to explore the choices available. Mysteries are compelling; we can't resist them.

At least that introduction sounds better than, "I don't know what we're doing in January, but it's sure to be good."

I shouldn't feel too guilty about it. After all, I've been scheduling OS/2-related meetings since 1992, and this is the first time I've come up short. (No smart-aleck puns, please.) However, the topic and guest of the January 1998 meeting is a mystery even to me; I have a few possibilities, but nothing confirmed as of press time (or, to be honest, even a little *after* press time). January seems to be the month that nobody can make it to Phoenix... not even the people in the snowbound midwest.

This is an excuse to tell you, "Check the user group's Web site, and pay attention to the announcements on the `members@possi.org` listserv." Yeah, that's the ticket.

At any rate, you can be sure that we'll all be at the Mountain Preserve Reception Center (1431 East Dunlap) on Tuesday, January 13, at 7:00pm. Won't you?

General meeting

what

▲ Mystery topic

where

▲ Mountain Preserve
Reception Center
1431 E Dunlap
Phoenix, Arizona

when

▲ Tuesday, January 13, 1997
▲ 6:30pm: Q & A session
▲ 7:00pm: Regular meeting

IBM related Web sites

IBM Software Home Page:
`www.software.ibm.com`

IBM US BESTeam:
`www.software.ibm.com/sw-sell/nabestweb`

Worldwide BESTeam:
`www.software.ibm.com/sw-sell/besteam`

Reseller Directory:
`www.software.ibm.com/shop/var`

IBM Internet:
`www.internet.ibm.com`

IBM Business Partners:
`www.ibm.com/partners`

IBM e-business:
`www.software.ibm.com/e-business`

Lotus home page:
`www.lotus.com`

IBM certification:
`www.ibm.com/certify`

IBM Redbooks:
`www.redbooks.ibm.com`

Coming events

This is a list of events scheduled by the Phoenix OS/2 Society. Unless otherwise noted, active members may attend any scheduled event for free.

Meeting notes

For the latest updates on the Society's event calendar, check the Web site at `http://www.possi.org`.

For meeting information and other queries, call the Phoenix OS/2 Society's voice mail at 602-949-4341.

If you have suggestions, ideas, or comments on the content of general meetings, contact the Society's Program Chair, Esther Schindler, at the general meetings or send email to `esther@bitranch.com`.

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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March

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29	30	31				

April

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26	27	28	29	30		

May

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 1998

5 Magazine submission deadline for February issue. Articles should be sent to `editor@possi.org`. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

6 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

6 Developer's SIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Lyle Wilson. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

13 HOW (How OS/2 Works) GIG. Meeting is 3:30pm to 5:30pm. Coordinators Rosey Rosenwald and Stan Kropen. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

13 General meeting; Topic to be announced. (Don't you like surprises?) Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

24 Board meeting and magazine prep. Meeting is 10:00am to 1:00pm. Eat a brunch, learn about the inner workings of the Society, and help get extended attributes ready to mail. Location: Bill and Esther Schindler's house in north Scottsdale. *Note: New address! 9355 E Mark Lane. It's only a half mile from the old place, but you'll probably need directions. Call 585-5852 or send email to* `esther@bitranch.com`. *Remember to bring a potluck dish to share, too.*

February 1998

3 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

3 LAN SIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Elliot Abramowitz. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for March issue. Articles should be sent to `editor@possi.org`. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

10 HOW (How OS/2 Works) GIG. Meeting is 3:30pm to 5:30pm. Coordinators Rosey Rosenwald and Stan Kropen. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

10 General meeting; Spitfire Software, showing InCharge! accounting software for OS/2. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

28 Board meeting and magazine prep.

March 1998

3 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

3 Developer's SIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Lyle Wilson. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for April issue. Articles should be sent to `editor@possi.org`. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

10 HOW (How OS/2 Works) GIG. Meeting is 3:30pm to 5:30pm. Coordinators Rosey Rosenwald and Stan Kropen. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

10 General meeting; (tentative) Dadaware's Embellish. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

28 Board meeting and magazine prep.

April 1998

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to `editor@possi.org`. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

7 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

7 LAN SIG. Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Elliot Abramowitz. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

14 HOW (How OS/2 Works) GIG. Meeting is 3:30pm to 5:30pm. Coordinators Rosey Rosenwald and Stan Kropen. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

14 General meeting; (tentative) Southsoft's PMMail and PMNews. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

25 Board meeting and magazine prep.

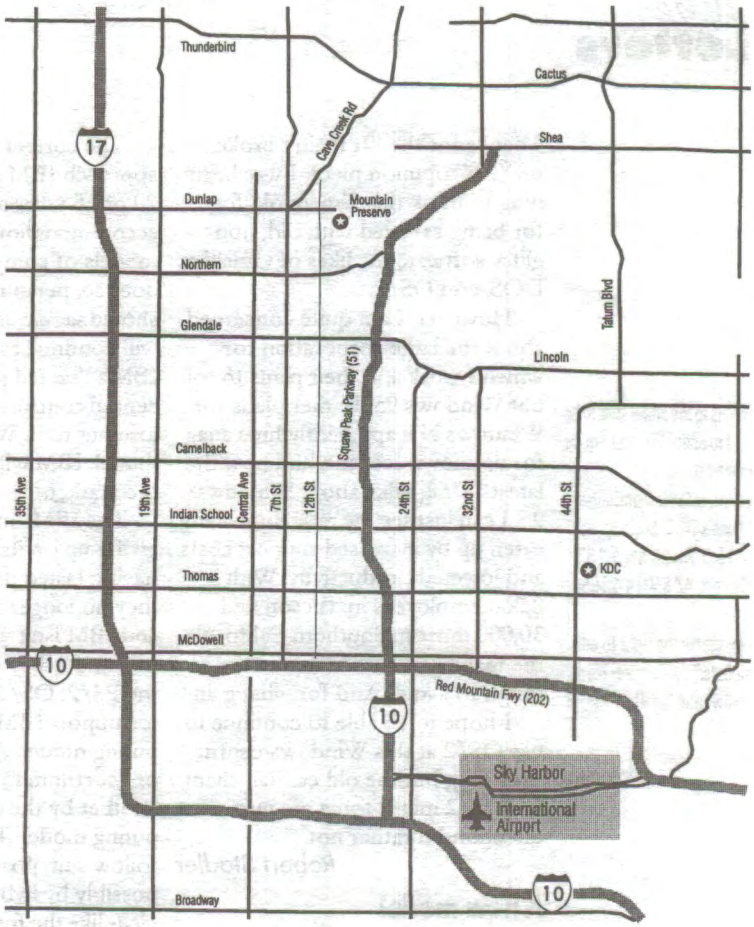
Meeting locations

General meetings are held at the Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

From the Black Canyon, exit at Dunlap and head east. From the Squaw Peak, exit at Northern. Go west to 12th Street, turn right and go north to Dunlap, turn right, and it's two blocks up on the right.

The "How OS/2 Works General Interest Group" now meets at the Mountain Preserve Reception Center on the afternoon of the general meeting.

The Internet SIG, Developer's SIG, and LAN SIG all meet at Knowledge Development Center, 2999 N 44th St, Suite 400. That's just north of Thomas, in the building with the green dome. Plenty of free parking space is available in the garage behind the building.



If the mailing label on the back cover says "sample," then this may be the only copy of *extended attributes* that you will ever receive. If you want to keep getting the magazine (and receive all the other benefits of membership), you must join! A 12 month membership in the US is only $30. (See the form for membership pricing in other areas.) Tear out the application form, fill it in, and mail it with the membership fee to the Society's address.

.sigs
SIG news

HOW GIG

by Stan Kropen <skropen@ibm.net

The December 9 HOW GIG was a good news, bad news event. The good news was that ten people showed up, but the bad news was that the laptop computer would not power up. Had we booted up, Sam MacDonald volunteered to make a presentation about the DeScribe word processor. Instead we talked about and tried to solve all the worldly problems.

Mike Briggs is going to see what might be done to get the laptop working again. However, the next HOW GIG, January 13, should take place since Robert (Rosey) Rosenwald generally uses his own laptop.

net.sig

by Mike Briggs <mike@possi.org

At the next net.sig meeting we will learn about DSL. One of the fine folks at Fiestanet will explain how digital subscriber lines will work, the pros, the cons, and how things look for those of us in the Valley who want fast access to the Internet. We'll also discuss email filters and how to avoid some of the spam out there.

Letters to the editor should be sent to editor@possi.org, or mailed to:
Editor, extended attributes
Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc
5515 N 7th St, Ste 5-133
Phoenix, AZ 85014-2585

We reserve the right to edit all letters for content, readability, and length.

Thanks for the "If it ain't broke, break it" opinion piece. I was beginning to think that I'm an old fogey for being satisfied with old, non-glitsy software the likes of Quicken, DOS, and OS/2.

However, I am quite concerned about the large corporation for which I work and their plans to roll out Windows 95. Earlier plans for Windows NT apparently hit a snag for unknown reasons, and now the latest IT rag talks about Windows 95. I can just see the raise pool being eaten up by increased support costs and lowered productivity. With 8,000 employees in Tucson and 30,000 more in Southern California, the makings of a disaster will be tough to avoid. And for what gain?

I hope to be able to continue to use OS/2 at this Windows-centric company, but the old cc:Mail client for OS/2 might force me into a direction I'd rather not.

Robert Stadler

A new model

The major issue, at the moment, isn't a question of market domination. It's a question of *who controls the computers.*

IBM's model is one of central control. NCs are part of that model. It definitely has its place in the scheme of things, and its advantages.

But the genie has escaped from the bottle. "Personal computers" are exactly that, and becoming more so on almost a daily basis. Attempting to exclude them is a mistake, because they'll work their way back in anyway, if not on a department level then on an individual level. They appeal to the part of us that wants to be independent, that wants to do something without having bosses sign off on it first. Once there, the demand to get the personal computers linked in to the centralized systems will grow... and IBM will again find the central control slipping away.

The correct approach, and the approach IBM should have taken 20 or 25 years ago, is to find an accommodation between both models of computing. Until IBM does so, personal—or, perhaps I should say *decentralized*—computing will continue to make inroads on IBM's "sacred ground," and IBM's central control model will ultimately lose out to it. With the loss of that model, IBM will lose its foothold in the market.

The IBM "model" is why IBM is giving up on its smaller customers: having tasted personal computing, they no longer accept the model, and IBM isn't willing to work with the model they prefer. The IBM PC, the PS/2, OS/2... all were intended to support IBM's centralized computing model. All were "adopted" or "corrupted" in one way or another by the decentralized computing model. The NC will likely follow suit, possibly directly and possibly by hybrid central/local services like the future palmtops I mentioned. Or possibly both together.

In IBM's view, the "fat client" must go away because it's part of the decentralized computing model. NCs running WSOD are part of the centralized model — for now, until the purveyors of the decentralized model catch up to it and find a way to turn it into a decentralized resource.

I suspect that WSOD will be a better starting point for a combined model than would the "fat client." I can even think of a relatively simple arrangement, almost certainly possible with WSOD *as it exists now,* that would be a first step in the direction of reconciling the two models.

IBM is moving toward (a) NCs and (b) e-business. There have been scattered reports from Japan of a PDA-ish critter running what appears to be a WSOD variant. This causes me to wonder.

Maybe, just maybe, the Network Computing division *is* working on a synthesis. Let Microsoft have its decentralized playpen: while decentralized computing can overwhelm the defenses of a centralized-computing fortress the same way a mob can overwhelm a platoon, it tends to choke on its own wastes and kill itself off after it has had its day. Meanwhile, the Network Computing division is making forays into the largely unexplored territory of a hybrid structure, where a personal machine has enough local storage and processing capability to do personal tasks but can take advantage of the greater resources of one or more centralized facilities remotely. (Recently, I've been playing with the design of a security system to facilitate this, based on an outgrowth of signed Java applets; the first draft includes components that look a *lot* like another recent IBM technology; if I had a better grounding in security I might be able to advance a serious proposal in this area.)

The fat client is still doomed under this scenario, but I suspect it's doomed anyway: its mode of operation is the "mob" described above. Eventually it'll collapse under its own weight. But if it's properly designed, a hybrid could provide the benefits of both the centralized and decentralized models — and add a level of security that's currently missing.

Brandon S. Allbery

Lastmonth

Preventing disaster

by Joel Frey

"Uh-oh."

Unless you're prone to stronger language, that's about all you can say when the reality sinks in that you've just lost something important and it wasn't backed up. Of course, a savvy user would never operate without a good backup, especially when you're doing something like, oh let's say, partitioning a hard drive.

Being regular

Taking regular backups is a no-brainer. There's no excuse for not doing it. And it's easy enough to set up automatic scheduling so it happens even if you have a serious case of CRS (Can't Remember Syndrome ...or something like that).

So the only way I could have made such a big mess of my system, as I did recently, was by failing to do all of the above. I know, you're thinking, "What a bonehead!" What can I say? It's easy to get complacent when you have a reliable system that hasn't given you any real trouble in a couple of years. Besides, I was partitioning a new drive with nothing on it. Excuses, excuses. Bad things happen.

BackAgain/2

Keeping bad things from getting worse was the topic of our November general meeting. Brent Bowlby of Computer Data Strategies, Inc was there showing us BackAgain/2, a line of excellent native OS/2 backup products that come in three flavors: Personal, Professional (which supports a wider range of devices), and Enterprise (with support for automatic tape loaders). Brent brought along an autoloader to help show the product. Of course this isn't something you want to lug on an airplane, so he had to do a little remedial work on it after having it shipped by a package service.

Although the product was originally written for OS/2, CDS will be rolling out a Win32 version to satisfy the requirements of some of their customers. Brent pointed out that this was not a port, but a complete rewrite, it also involves support for the MTF file format (you know what that "M" is for) for large customers that require a more common file format. He noted that the proprietary format that gives the product its speed and high compression will still be available for both platforms, resulting in the ability to move files between systems.

BackAgain/2 maintains logs of backup activity and catalogs of the data backed up. These can be used, for instance, by user-written programs to audit backups and perform reruns or restarts in the event of a system failure. The product also provides a command line interface that can be driven from user-written procedures. As Brent pointed out, there's no limit to the complexity you can have using this facility. Naturally, that can be a lifesaver in unusual situations, or a nightmare-in-waiting.

Outstanding features

The two outstanding features of BackAgain/2, from my perspective, are the built-in scheduler and the standalone restore capability.

Even after I got my system reinstalled, I wasn't able to get the restore to work, although I was still lacking a recent backup. Since Workplace Shell integration is lacking in the backup product I was using (which shall remain nameless), I had standalone restore capability via the boot diskettes, but setting up automated scheduling was something I never got around to. Having this integrated into the product makes it much more likely to get used. (Incidentally, when Brent polled the audience about their choice of backup software, mine wasn't even mentioned.)

"I don't know why, but I've never done a live disaster recovery. This should be fun." I've been through a few disaster recovery exercises, over the years, and *fun* is not a word I would use to describe any of them. But Brent reformatted his hard drive and restored his entire system from the backup he created during the demo, using the standalone restore. While that was running, the door prize drawing was conducted in which he gave away two copies of the Professional edition.

Brent also discussed some discontinued tape drives that he considers good bargains. (CDS also makes tape drives available on their Web site; they come with a copy of BackAgain/2. Check `www.cds-inc.com`)

After about ten minutes, his system came back up. That was too easy. I think I'm ready for a new backup package.

OS/2oons by Harry Martin

"OS/2 dead?...Naaa, it's got more lives than all my cats combined, and then some".

The basics of IBM Works

by Marilyn Pizzo

OS/2 offers us a lot. Some things are right there in front of us. Others are tucked away... but are invaluable.

IBM Works is a little bit hidden, but it's a very functional set of applications: spreadsheet, word processor, database, and so on. You're set to go with IBM Works, without having to buy add-on software.

But where is it hidden? Open the Programs object on your Desktop. In there you will find the Applications folder. If you selected the Bonus Pack option when you installed OS/2 Warp 4, you'll find IBM Works in that folder.

At first you might be a little surprised at what you see. There are sixteen icons in front of you. Which one do you choose? I started at the beginning, and checked out each one. Here's what I discovered:

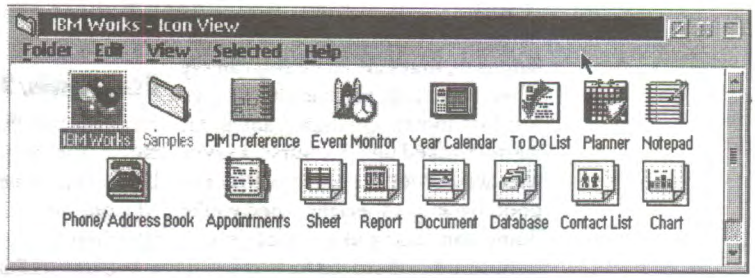
IBM Works is where you find the word processor, spreadsheet, chart, database, and report writer. Let's examine each of these and its capabilities. Since I did not have any existing files to open, I started at New.

Word processing

At first glance, the IBM Works word processor looks like any other word processor. It didn't appear that I would have to be retrained from those add-on programs.

I was a little skeptical as to exactly what I could do. As I checked out the features I became pleasantly surprised. File, Edit, and View have all the functions you expect to find. The Character menu is where you change fonts, use italics, or underline text. With the Paragraph menu option, you have options like alignment, page break, and setting tabs. (You can also use all these features from the buttons.) The Document choices make available such spell check, word count, header, footer, and mail merge. In Object, you find tools, outline color, pattern, and other fun things. So far, so good.

Then I checked out the buttons. Some of the pictures were self-explanatory, but others were less clear.



I expected a bare bones program, not a word processor that has spell check, a thesaurus, an option to add a hyphen or set tabs, all at the touch of a button. This free word processor has the basic functionality you look for and need, with the handy features of the "big boys." You can even draw pictures!

Spreadsheet

The spreadsheet looked familiar also. If you've used 1-2-3, you might see some similarities; then again, most spreadsheets have been fashioned after 1-2-3. I checked out all the features available. Again, I expected to see a "lite" version of a normal program.

And again, I was proven wrong. This spreadsheet has all the functionality that most of us need. Check out the options available under the Cell heading. Under Options you can set the spreadsheet to automatically recalculate as you change values. You'll also find a page setup, header, and footer to name a few. From the buttons you can add an =, +, -, etc. with a click of that button or shade a region of cells, underline, align the value within a cell, change the font and its size. I became more impressed as I proceeded.

Charting features

The Chart program seems equally as reliable. I am not a big charts person only because I don't use them in everyday life, but I was pleased with the options available in this program. With a click of a button you can have a bar chart, line chart, pie chart, or a combination of bar and line charts. You can also toggle between 2D and 3D. Of course, there are the usual font options shared by the word processor and spreadsheet have.

Database

Also in the IBM Works realm is a database. Your first screen asks you if you are creating a new database or opening an existing one. When you start a new database you must fill in information. You name the field and select the type of data that will fill that field. You can adjust the width of the field to accommodate lengthy names, numbers, etc. When you click on Add, that field is added to the database. You can define more fields, change an existing field, or delete a field if you find you don't really need it. A database can be names and addresses, part numbers, descriptions, and prices... anything you want. It was very easy to understand, and I didn't have to read a lot of instructions.

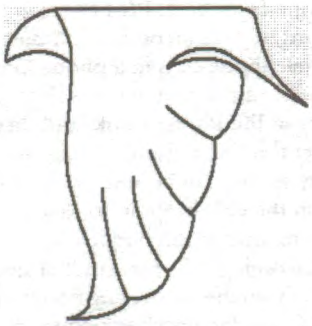
Creating reports

To print a report from a database, you can use Report Writer. You select a database, then select the fields you want in your report, and the order in which you want them. It seems pretty basic and straightforward, nothing fancy. But then again, a report writer isn't meant to be a desktop publisher.

The next folder you see is titled Samples. Inside it is a variety of documents, samples of what you can do in IBM Works. There is an invoice, envelope, newsletter, fax, etc. Double click on one to open it.

Personal information manager

The Personal Information Manager (PIM) is a collection of productivity tools that make it easier to manage personal information such as phone



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numbers, appointments, or contacts. The Appointment Book, Planner, and Year Calendar all store information in a common database.

You can store your daily appointments using the Appointment Book object, and view a summary using the Planner object. Any changes you make in one of these objects is reflected in all three. To reschedule an appointment from one date to another simply select the entry and drag it to another date in the Appointment Book, Planner, or Calendar. Neat!

The Appointment Book shows the current week at a glance. You can schedule and view appointments on a daily basis. You can advance or go back to other weeks by using the arrow and double arrow buttons at the bottom of the window to turn the pages. Double click on a day. You are now in the New Appointment screen. Fill in the information for your appointment. To edit the details, double click on the appointment entry. You can delete an entry by right clicking on the entry and selecting delete. Set an alarm to alert you to an upcoming appointment, by selecting the Alarm button in the New Appointment or Edit Appointment window.

The Planner shows the current month. You can see other months by using the arrows. The days are across the top and times down the left side to make a grid. Double click on a date and time. The New Appointment screen appears. After you fill in the information you have the option of where to have this information show up. As I experimented I placed my entry in the to-do list and the Appointment Book, the most logical places to me. I went back to check the two locations and they were there. These features are getting easier to use.

When you open the Year Calendar you see the entire current year with the present date marked. If you double click on any date on the calendar, the to-do list for that date is presented. This is a quick way to view a particular date to see what is on your agenda so you can plan ahead. You can switch to the next year or previous year by right clicking on the calendar and selecting view.

I tried to open the Event Monitor. Nothing happened. Of course, then I tried to open it again. Still nothing. Was it broken? The Event Monitor is a hidden manager of alarms and program launcher. When it is open it is shown on the Window List. Whenever you open a scheduling related Works program, such as the Planner or To-Do List, Event Monitor automatically opens so it can keep track of what is going on for you. (It's a little like a secretary.)

The to-do list is a handy feature. Please don't mistake it for a "honey do" list though. When you open the to-do list, the to-do list launcher and the to-do list Current Date both open. Double click on the current date area. You can add, view, edit, and delete items or mark them as complete. To add an item to your to-do list, double click on the date. The to-do Item Information window appears to allow you to enter the item. As you enter different types of items, the PIM saves these to form a drop-down list for future use. You can set priority levels or assign a date to the task and make it recur.

The next feature is the Notepad. When you first open it there is nothing. Gee, that's exciting! Since double clicking seems to be the key to all of these features, guess what I did... I double clicked. This allows you to make entries into the notepad area. This would be handy to jot down reference notes about a particular client or situation. Right click to select either Insert or Append. The Notepad—Page Information dialog box will appear. Complete this information to title pages and specify the type of information you will be enter on the page.

The Phone/Address Book can be a real asset. Go to the appropriate letter of the alphabet. Double click to bring up the new entry screen. As you look through the tabs you can see how much information you can enter. This is a great basic address book with plenty of features. It is also a dialer so you can connect with anyone from here. PIM keeps a record of your incoming and outgoing telephone calls in a phone log. To place an outgoing call, select an entry in the Phone Book, and then select the Call button or drag an entry to the Call button. When you finish the call, hang up to save the information in the phone log.

Incoming calls are handled similarly. From the Answering notebook and Outgoing notebook you can launch the to-do list and Appointment Book. You can schedule an appointment with a contact from the Phone Book by dragging it to the Appointment Book or Planner window. The Contact List object gives you a way to store contacts related to a specific topic. Entries in a Contact List are shadows of the entries in the Phone Book. To create a Contact List object, drag the Contact List template from the IBM Works folder. You can then drag entries from the Phone Book to the Contact List.

PIM Preferences allows you to set some preferences to be applied to some of the applications. You can set holidays or customize the Phone Book and Appointment Book. You can even assign a password to be applied to the Phone/Address Book, Appointments, to-do list, and Notepad. That is a nice security feature especially if you don't want anyone making entries or deleting them for you.

The next six icons: Sheet, Report, Document, Database, Contact List, and Chart are templates you can use to create another. For my personal use, I only need one of everything but you may have other requirements.

A nice surprise

It certainly was a pleasant surprise to find so much packed away under the mask of the IBM Works button. Take a look for yourself. There's something for everyone.

.review

Web Psychos, Stalkers, and Pranksters

by Powell Gammill

Web Psychos, Stalkers, and Pranksters: How to Protect Yourself Online
by Michael A. Banks
ISBN 1-57610-137-1
398pp. $24.99

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So you finally became one of the millions to get Internet access. Eager to plunge into this new experience, the talk of all of your friends, you click on your browser and go to this "Yahoo" about which you heard so much. Maybe you search for a rock group you really like, or you look for OS/2 topics, or you find a list of chat rooms that sound like fun. Point and click. Wow, this is so easy! Soon you have visited dozens of sites, filled out all sorts of questionnaires, joined mailing lists, found some news groups, and responded to public messages. This is great!

A few days pass. When you log on to your ISP (Internet Service Provider) you find over a dozen messages waiting. All right! You eagerly begin to read them. What the #@#!!* is this?! The messages have titles like "Great Investment Opportunity," "Get Rich Overnight," "Work at Home," "For Sale." Even the message titled, "Message from your Friend," is from some clown you do not know, offering to sell you a list of cheap surplus government property.

Worse, the next day you receive over 30 messages like this, drowning out the one or two messages you really wanted. Congratulations: you have just become the latest victim of spam, the unsolicited email that plagues virtually everyone on the Net.

Perhaps one message is a flame (angry letter) from someone in a news group who did not like what you wrote. Besides calling you every name he could think of, you learn that he knows a disturbing amount of personal information about you, and you wonder who provided it. (Hint: *You* did.) Also in the message is your home address, with a promise of a personal visit very soon.

A dangerous place

The Internet can be an exciting, fantastic experience, but it can also be fraught with hazards and malevolence. A new book by Michael Banks, *Web Psychos, Stalkers, and Pranksters*, collects a large amount of well-organized information on how to avoid, identify, and deal with the various miscreants one might come across on the Web. This book is written with beginning to intermediate Internet users in mind, with step-by-step guidance in accomplishing the techniques discussed.

Indeed, I would strongly recommend that anyone who is considering obtaining Internet access read this book before getting an online account. Without proper preparation, a disturbingly large quantity of information about yourself will be disclosed during your first online experience, and it will remain available on the Web in perpetuity. The author details how to safeguard much of this information from ever getting on to the net without your permission. To reiterate: once any information regarding you makes its way on to the Internet, that information is permanently available to anyone who has Net access, and the knowledge of how to obtain it.

The book starts off relaying just about every kind of threat that you could encounter on the Net, and what kind of information is out there about the typical online user. Mr. Banks specifies how to obtain this information, and encourages you, in a step-by-step hands-on demonstration, to spend a few hours compiling your own information already available on the Web. (While the writer does not mention OS/2 in the book, several of the utility programs he discusses, such as `finger`, `traceroute`, and `nslookup`, are built into OS/2.) You can then limit, and in some cases try to remove, your personal information that is currently on the Net.

Learning netiquette

You're given extensive advice on how to avoid making enemies online, by learning the conventions and expected behavior on each chat/IRC session or news group that you join (that is, netiquette). "There is nothing you can say that will not offend somebody." Also included are discussions on the privacy of your email (It is not!), online romance, and the big lies people tell about themselves when they believe they are anonymous.

In some chapters, the book deals with doing business on the Net in a safer—though still not safe—manner. The reasons why Web businesses fail is mentioned. Conducting transactions on the Internet is currently fraught with peril (and quite clearly delineated), and Michael Banks provides suggestions on the avoidance of these pitfalls. Examples of online crime, scams, cons, and schemes abound. Learn what the Web sites you visit learn about you from querying the cookies placed on your hard drive. Computer viruses are also discussed: how they work, how to avoid them, and (especially) how not to fall victim to the rampant overblown paranoid fear generated by the popular press regarding the subject.

Dealing with spam

You are guided back into a far more detailed attack on spam, and how to avoid and/or deal with it. He also provides recommendations about how to avoid generating spam yourself. Several POSSI members could benefit from this section in regards to `possi.org`! Examples include passing on rumors, hoaxes, chain letters, quoting a lengthy message in its entirety followed by a two or three word comment, or responding to a message without pertinent message excerpts (so no one has a clue about what you are commenting on).

Banks also describes ways to set up a false ID, header information, and accounts, the use of anonymous and proxy servers, safer FTPing (downloads), and confounding spambots.

Detailed instructions are provided to track down the true identities of people on the Web, and how to use this intelligence to protect yourself from harassment. The author delivers a clear explanation on the necessity of documenting this harassment, and to whom you should (and should not) send this

continued on pg 24

.review

Clearlook: the clear alternative

by Rick Blankenbaker

With the anticipation over the upcoming releases of Lotus Smartsuite and Star Office 4.0 for OS/2, it is easy to forget that there are other choices for OS/2 users in the business applications market. One company that supplies such solutions is Sundial Systems, developer of such applications as DBExpert, Mesa 2, Relish, and Clearlook, the subject of this review.

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Seal Beach, CA 90740 USA

Phone: 562-596-5121
FAX: 562-596-7825
www.sundialsystems.com

Clearlook was originally developed by the Clearlook Corp. In April 1996, the product was taken over by Sundial Systems, and the current version, 1.71, was released late that year. The development continues; version 2.0 was demonstrated at Warpstock and, I was told, stands a good chance of seeing release in the first quarter of 1998.

Rick Blankenbaker is a test engineer with Motorola in Illinois. He has used OS/2 since 1994 and has been a POSSI member since April 1997.

My own search for a new word processor began several months ago. I wanted to step up from the IBM Works word processor to something more capable and better supported. After careful evaluation of the several available (Lotus WordPro, Escriba, Clearlook), almost available (Starwriter 4.0, Papyrus) and still-available-but-not-for-long (DeScribe), I chose Clearlook. I'd like to explain why I chose this product over its highly-regarded competition.

First words

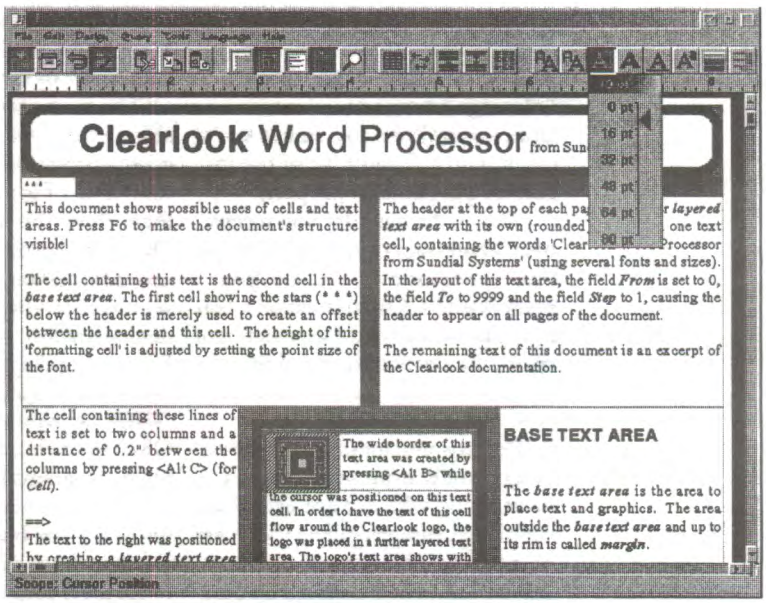
I installed the program without a hitch, it didn't take very long with only two floppies. The hard disk footprint was a paltry 5.4MB, including all documentation and demo files. The manual comes in two pieces; the larger one (252 pages) covers Clearlook 1.1, plus a smaller supplement (19 pages) covering the changes incorporated up to version 1.71. Although it sounds awkward, this arrangement did not cause me any problems; I rarely had to consult the manuals.

The first thing I noticed was the Status Window, which offers easy access to the built-in template, program setup, and Open Windows (a Clearlook-specific task list) objects. It also allows direct access to the user dictionary and thesaurus.

Fastest on the market

Probably the nicest feature of Clearlook became apparent quickly—its speed. Clearlook is advertised as "the fastest word processor in the OS/2 market." I'd probably modify that to "fastest in any market." It gives WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS a good run for its money. With most popular word processors getting fatter and slower with each release, it's nice to find one this responsive.

Clearlook has all the word processing functions which are now taken for granted; some, however, are implemented in innovative ways. For example, to change the font size, highlight the target text and select the font size button from the toolbar. This produces a drop-down ruler; grab the slider and adjust to the new point size. It's very intuitive and simple. Margins and tabs can be adjusted visually by selecting and dragging the appropriate icon on the horizontal ruler. Also, everything in Clearlook is WYSIWYG; there is no layout, draft, or print preview modes. To adjust the view, just grab the zoom drop-down slide and adjust. Want to see 16 pages at once? No problem—20% magnification will do it. Clearlook's support of tables, styles, and colored text is likewise very intuitive and fast.



If you like to use the keyboard rather than a mouse, Clearlook allows you to define key combinations for nearly every function available. The auto backup period can be adjusted individually for each document if desired. The thesaurus is one of the best, offering synonyms, antonyms, related and contrasted words, and definitions. The spell checker can check "on the fly" or post-composition, and can be configured, along with the thesaurus, for different languages. The undo function can back out of changes, one by one, to the last save.

The only features of Clearlook which I wasn't able to comprehend immediately were its "text cells" and "text areas." These are also its most powerful, moving Clearlook towards the realm of a desktop publishing package. Very basically, text moves around (or within) a text area, but cells flow dynamically with the text. Together, these two features allow the creation of very sophisticated layouts combining text and graphics. I had to refer to the manual to fully understand how these functions are used.

I did not have the opportunity to evaluate Sundial Systems' technical support, as I've had no problems. I did, however, email the company

with questions about future plans for Clearlook; I received a reply within a day. Past emails concerning other Sundial Systems products have always been answered promptly. I was able to talk to Randell Flint and Rollin White briefly at Warpstock; I left with the impression that this company definitely cares about its customers.

What's not to like?

Well, with all the good points, there must be some not-so-good, right? Surprisingly few. If your criteria of a quality product is based on the number of buttons on the toolbar, then Clearlook won't measure up. If you really need all the features of a MS-Office clone, look elsewhere. Think feature-quality, not feature-quantity; Clearlook has all the features necessary to produce great-looking documents.

The toolbar is not configurable, somewhat surprising since so many other aspects of this program are. It would be nice to be able to move it to the side or to a floating palette if desired. Also, Clearlook's handling of graphics is somewhat limited, as it handles only BMP format. However, this is offset by the "screen clip" and "window clip" functions, which allow easy importation of any graphic that can be displayed on the desktop.

A potentially major drawback is the dearth of import/export filters. Many folks need to share documents with others who use different products. Clearlook supports only standard ASCII text and WordPerfect 5.1, 5.2, 6.0, and 6.1 formats, besides its own. However, version 2.0 will reportedly include others, notably RTF and HTML.

So, should you consider Clearlook? If your machine is "processor-challenged," Clearlook is a good choice. Or maybe you'd like to preserve some choice in the OS/2 applications market. Or maybe you will choose it for the same reasons I did: it's efficient, functional without being bloated, marketed by a company solidly behind OS/2 (and nice folks too), and, of course, fast.

Sundial Systems can be found on the Web at `www.sundialsystems.com`. While you're there, download the demo version of Clearlook and give it a try. You'll find many more features than I could possibly cover here. Maybe, like me, after trying it out, you'll find that the wait for your next word processor is over.

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New and updated

compiled by Esther Schindler

These products have been released or significantly updated in the last month. We haven't looked at them yet... in fact, if you'd like to do so, contact Craig Greenwood at `reviews@possi.org`.

pmCSTeX for EPM

pmCSTeX is a macro package for the Enhanced Editor (EPM) built into OS/2. It adds functions that enable you to use the TeX layout language, installing its own CSTeX menu, hotkeys, and (optionally) a toolbar. Among the functions are:

- (La)TeXing the document or paragraph
- Previewing (dviPM version, full-screen, and printer previewing)
- Printing, and producing PostScript output (dvips-ing, GhostView, or psview)
- Access to other TeX tools such as BibTeX, MakeIndex, vlnka, and cstocs
- Generalized version of the "Include file under cursor" (Alt-1) action
- Syntax highlighting
- Hypertext help for the LaTeX2e commands.

pmCSTeX for EPM implements the best features of CSTeX MNU for DOS, TeXshell, EPMTeX, pmgraf, and emacs.

Find out more at `www.sci.muni.cz/~mikulik/os2.html` or contact Petr Mikulik, Laboratory of Thin Films and Nanostructures, Faculty of Science, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, `mikulik@physics.muni.cz`.

iIntegrale Java Controls

The iIntegrale class library is a set of controls which you may use in your Java applet or application to present an "image-smart" user interface.

iIntegrale controls inherit the background (image) of their iIntegrale container. They can display fly-over help in either the browser's status line or a label in the applet or application's window space. Many iIntegrale controls can contain an image, and you can easily develop new controls based upon iIntegrale.

More info, including demos, is available at `www.i-stream.com`. $79.95 Controls / $399.95 source

Lookout 1.01

Lookout for OS/2 is an internet notifier. It will watch Web, FTP and Gopher sites, and tell you if anything has changed. You can tell Lookout how often you want it to check a particular site, how you want it to notify you when something at the site changes, and things that Lookout can ignore when it checks a site.

Registration: $15, at BMT Micro.

CFM 5.0 Twain drivers

The CFM Twain driver is a self-reliant standard TWAIN module for scanner control. It can be run from most applications supporting the TWAIN standard and opens up to your scanner for all modern desktop publishing (DTP), optical character recognition (OCR) and document imaging (DIM) applications. The CFM TWAIN allows you to connect your scanner in two different ways to your computer: via a SCSI adapter board, or with an ASPI-compatible SCSI host adapter. Tested for use with PMView.

Registration: $50. Available at BMT Micro.

OpenChat 1.07

OpenChat/2 is an OS/2 Internet Relay Chat client. It allows you to connect to IRC (Internet Relay Chat) servers around the world and chat with other people in real time.

OpenChat/2 features list include:

- Multiple windows for different channels
- Nicklist window
- Extremely fast scripting
- Powerful default script included
- Multimedia support
- One click URL feed to Netscape and/or WebExplorer
- Color and font configurable via mouse popup palette/font menus
- Full color scrollback with color enabled cut and paste options
- DCC Resend/Reget/Resume support

Registration is $29. Available at BMT Micro.

Warpstock CD

You couldn't be there? You can still buy the CD!

BMT Micro is taking pre-orders for the Warpstock CD which will begin shipping in January. Attendees do not need to order; a disc will be sent to you at no cost.

The price for the CD is $20. It includes presentations, demo software from presenting vendors, and some other goodies.

Cosmos

Cosmos isn't exactly new, but BMT Micro has begun to carry it (for $45).

Learn about the fascinating world of astronomy. See the stars and planets in the past, present and future from any place on Earth. With Cosmos for OS/2 you can teach yourself and your children the exciting world of astronomy. The Cosmos for OS/2 is a fast 32-bit, multithreading application which displays colorful pictures of many celestial objects. It is highly accurate and has been awarded with an IBM OS/2 Development award.

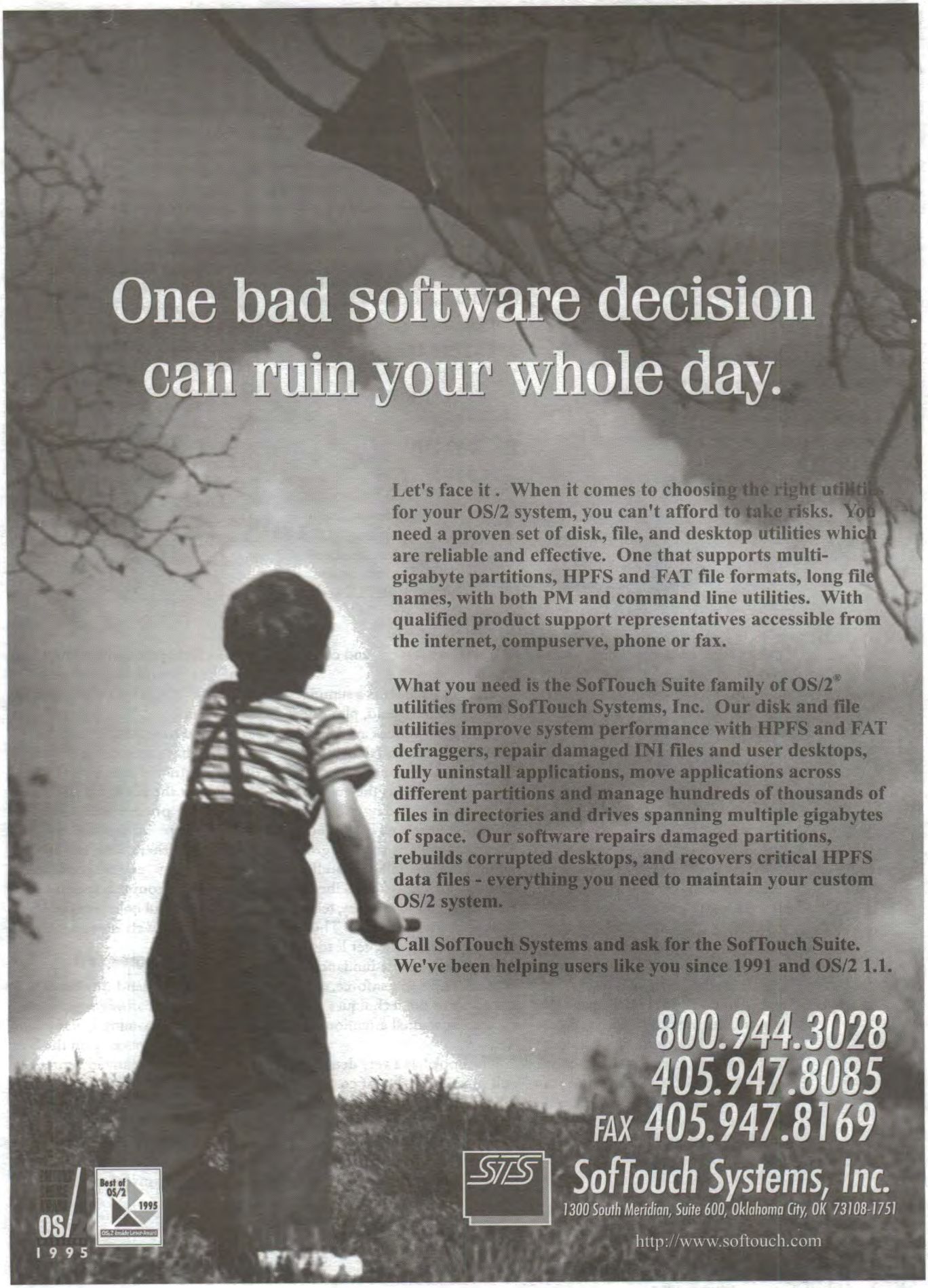
CPU monitor 1.11

This CPU monitor, for up to 16 CPUs, displays a graph of the activity of each CPU. It's customizable and resizeable. This utility uses very little CPU time, as it uses a new-to-Warp 4 API to gather CPU usage stats. As a result, it does not continually poll your machine to find out how busy it is, unlike most other CPU monitors.

Available in the OS/2 Central forum on Compuserve.

REXXCC v3.21

REXXCC 3.21 is a tiny REXX "compiler" for OS/2 REXX programs. It "compiles" REXX programs by substituting the source code with any text. REXXCC "compresses" REXX programs by deleting all comments, superfluous whitespaces and CR/LFs. The program is freeware by Bernd Schemmer, and can be found in the OS/2 Central forum on Compuserve.


One bad software decision
can ruin your whole day.
Let's face it . When it comes to choosing the right utilities for your OS/2 system, you can't afford to take risks. You need a proven set of disk, file, and desktop utilities which are reliable and effective. One that supports multi-gigabyte partitions, HPFS and FAT file formats, long file names, with both PM and command line utilities. With qualified product support representatives accessible from the internet, compuserve, phone or fax.
What you need is the SofTouch Suite family of OS/2® utilities from SofTouch Systems, Inc. Our disk and file utilities improve system performance with HPFS and FAT defraggers, repair damaged INI files and user desktops, fully uninstall applications, move applications across different partitions and manage hundreds of thousands of files in directories and drives spanning multiple gigabytes of space. Our software repairs damaged partitions, rebuilds corrupted desktops, and recovers critical HPFS data files - everything you need to maintain your custom OS/2 system.
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Best of OS/2 1995
OS/2 Inside Lotus Award
OS/2 1995

downloads

The hit parade

provided by Pete Norloff

Among the many under appreciated resources for OS/2 users is the OS/2 Shareware BBS, which has more than 10,000 OS/2 files. You can find it at `www.os2bbs.com`.

Here's the BBS's most recent report of popular downloads; perhaps you'll find something you'd like.

EASYFIX.ZIP

306K 10-25-97

Install OS/2 fixpacks from your local hard disk (v1.01).

W4-PAPER.TXT

341K 10-07-97

Fine tune OS/2 Warp 4. (ASCII text)

BTOS2850.ZIP

297K 10-25-97

The BOOTOS2 program is a utility that allows you to build a bootable OS/2 V2, V3, or V4 system using an existing OS/2 V2 or V3 system. The boot system can be installed on either floppy disks or a hard disk partition. Version 8.50. (Bootos2.zip has been replaced and isn't in the file collection any more.)

OMNI517.ZIP

258K 10-30-97

OS/2 Warp OMNI Printer driver v30.517 for OS/2 Warp 3/4. For HP, Epson, Canon, and some others.

UNZ532X2.EXE

232K 11-09-97

Info-ZIP UNZIP v5.32 32-bit OS/2 binaries.

ZOC3062.ZIP

810K 9-18-97

ZOC v3.062: 32-bit modem, telnet and ISDN communications application. Outstanding GUI, solid VT220 and Zmodem, features include CIS-B, Kermit, online JPG/GIF viewer, REXX scripting.

ZIP22X2.ZIP

139K 11-09-97

Info-ZIP ZIP v2.2 32-bit OS/2 binaries.

FMOS2.ZIP

156K 9-19-97

File Manager for OS/2 (FILEMAN), v1.12. Fullscreen/window OS/2 program for managing files and directories on one or more drives simultaneously. This program is IBM OS/2 Employee Written Software.

CDFS.EXE

56K 9-29-97

CD Rom File systems driver replacement (CDFS.IFS, 5-19-97) for OS/2 Warp. Adds MS Joliet CD ROM unicode support and mixed case filenames 32 chararcters as needed a.o. for Java toolkit CD ROM.

Web psychos (cont)

evidence to ensure this malcontent has a bad day.

You are not alone in being victimized by spam, Internet computer fraud, or in being harassed, or even stalked by a cretin online. To fight such abuse, the author lists numerous Web sites where you can seek information, help, and solace on all of these problems.

Children on the Net

Finally, Mr. Banks discusses software designed to enhance your safety and security on the Internet. This section includes a discussion of what I consider the most abhorrent threat on the Web: pedophiles! An explanation is offered on maintaining control of your children's access to the net (blocking), an outsider's online access to your kids (filtering), and how to record and monitor your child's interactions and activities while on the Internet (logging). It is especially important to keep personal information about your children from landing on the Internet. There are also surveys of email encryption programs, filtering programs, proxy servers, and cookie eaters.

The final chapter is a summation of what you have read, plus a few remaining techniques available to harass the harassers (some of which the author does not endorse).

Michael Banks is the author of many books, including the popular *The Modem Reference*. His writing style follows the golden rules of great communication: tell your audience what you are going to tell them, tell them what you have to say, tell them what you have told them. The last sentence in each chapter leads into the next one. The redundancies in the book serve to reinforce, expand, and enhance the techniques of dealing with unwanted attention on the Net.

The book has a very detailed and well-organized table of contents, and an outline table is present at the beginning of each chapter. Further complementing the book is an extensive index, and an appendix that is a compendium of the hundreds of Web sites mentioned in the book, grouped into many categories. Each chapter also contains brief highlights identified by either a "Tips" or "A Closer Look" icon in the margins.

I would have preferred the author to have included a few more of the illustrative anecdotes found throughout the book. I'd also like the book be printed with a more readable 12 point font size.

The publisher's Web site at `www.coriolis.com/webpsychos` has excerpts from this useful book, and a wonderful collection of links to the various Web sites mentioned.

Highly recommended

I highly recommend this book to anyone who is considering gaining Web access, becoming a Net terrorist, or to those currently on the Net. This book will greatly lower the sense of security you currently feel on the Web. By following Michael Banks' advice, you will surely avoid trouble, irritation, and embarrassment down the line, making this book a worthy investment.

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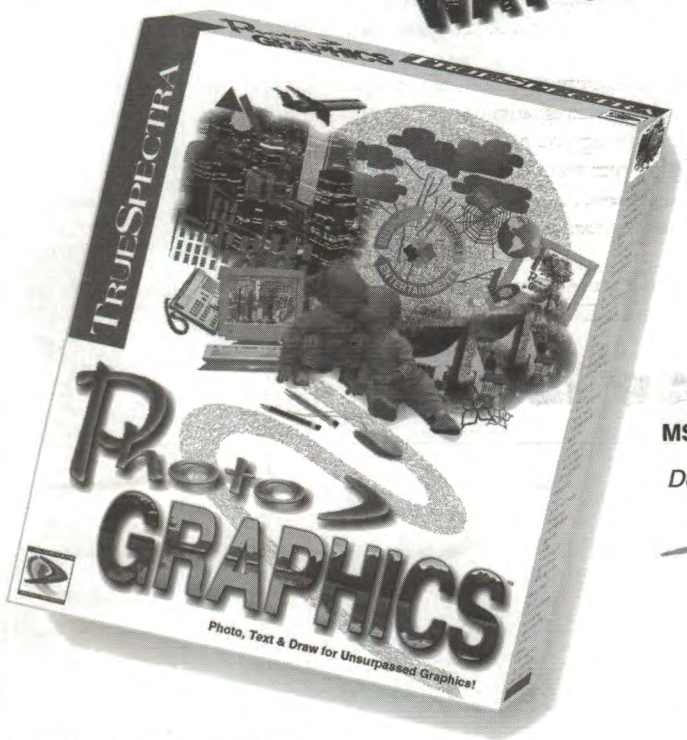

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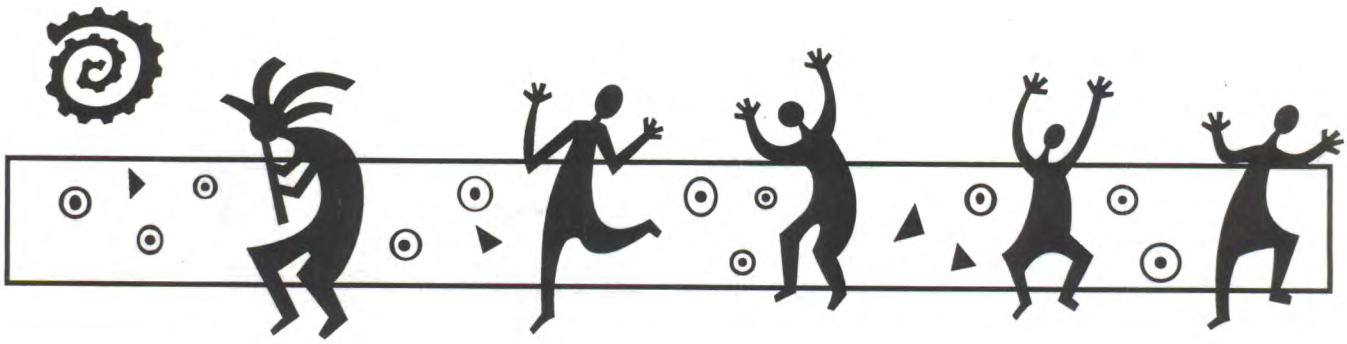

The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

The Phoenix OS/2 Society is a computer user group dedicated to OS/2. We have been publishing our award-winning magazine, *extended attributes* since August of 1994, and we have members all over the world.

Yes, this is a user group publication, and that sometimes shows; however, that's also an advantage, since you get real-world feedback about OS/2 and OS/2 products from other users, not just jaded, cynical journalists.

How useful will it be to join the Phoenix OS/2 Society if you aren't in Arizona? We see the Phoenix OS/2 Society as something akin to the National Geographic Society or the Smithsonian; while most members only see a magazine, you're actually a member of a society, and can participate in its activities when you happen to be in the area.

Even without activities that take place in Phoenix, Society membership includes product discounts that alone could make membership worthwhile. Taking advantage of one such discount could easily save you the entire cost of membership, giving you a "free" subscription.

Plus, the Society is prominent in the computing community. We are *already* heard by IBM; they listen to what we say. Several IBM executives get *extended attributes*. They don't get it for the "club news"—they use it to learn what OS/2 users really care about. And they respond to what they read.

You're not just getting a magazine. You're getting a voice.

If you would like to continue to receive the magazine, fill out the membership card in the center

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